

that Members spend too much time arguing and bickering. There clearly has been too much partisan wrangling in recent years, but people often don't understand that Congress is designed to allow contentious debates on the major policy issues of the day. In a country as large and remarkably diverse as ours, one of the key roles of Congress is to act as a sounding board for all the diverse groups in our society. Allowing all sides a chance to be heard as we try to reach a consensus on a long list of difficult issues means that the debate may at times be contentious, but it also helps to keep our country from coming apart at the seams.

Conclusion: Public misconceptions about Congress aren't simply of interest to academics. In our representative democracy they have a major impact on how well our system of government works. They lead to public feelings of mistrust and alienation, and give rise to cynicism about government in general and Congress in particular. Restoring confidence in government requires both improved performance by government and improved understanding of its role.

Congress is a complex, important, and fascinating institution, with both strengths and weaknesses. I am impressed almost daily with the way it tackles difficult problems and acts as a national forum in developing a consensus. I am particularly impressed with the role it has played in creating and maintaining a nation more free than any other. Ensuring that the American people have an accurate understanding of Congress' role in national governance and its strengths and weaknesses is one of our most important challenges in the years ahead. We need to get Americans to think twice about the role of Congress and its impact on their lives.

FOREST HEALTH IN COLORADO

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the health of the national forests in Colorado and the economies of rural communities are at risk from current national forest management practices. Severe threats from fire, insects and disease endanger the forests and the health, happiness and well-being of the citizens of Colorado. While properly utilized timber harvests can effectively contribute to restoring the health of forests, timber programs on the national forests have been almost completely eliminated in Colorado.

Many scientists believe that Colorado has more, and older, trees now than at any time in recorded history. The health and capacity of Colorado's forests is directly related to the volume of timber harvested. Without proper management, thinning or prescribed burns, timber inventory accumulates to the point where growth is impeded, and stands become susceptible to wildfires, beetle infestations and disease. The proper harvests add valuable and essential resources to the economy while reducing the potential for catastrophic fires by eliminating dangerously high levels of fuels.

Mr. Speaker, the motivation of the Forest Service these days seems to be driven not by what is best for the forest, but by what group protests the loudest. Meanwhile, timber budgets and timber sales decline and administrative costs escalate. Directing funds away from timber budgets negates forest management

plans, undermines public input into the process, and harms the forest ecosystem. Such impediments to the Forest Service mission have resulted in a de facto policy of reduced use, increased risk of wildfires, and deteriorating forest health.

Better national forest timber management programs are essential to the proper stewardship of the National forests in Colorado and to the health, condition and structure of the environment. Accordingly, I have urged my colleagues in the Colorado delegation and the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service to support proper timber management tools to ensure better forest health in Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, the Colorado State Senate has spent considerable time evaluating the impact of our National forests on the Colorado economy. I hereby submit for the record the following Resolution adopted by the Colorado State Legislature.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 97-26—ADOPTED BY THE COLORADO LEGISLATURE, 1997

CONCERNING THE SUPPORT OF PROPER TIMBER HARVESTING AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL TO ENSURE BETTER FOREST HEALTH IN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, The health of the national forests in Colorado and the economies of rural communities are at risk of current national forest management practices; and

WHEREAS, The threat of fire, insects, and disease endangers the health, happiness, and well-being of the citizens of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Timber programs on national forests have been almost completely eliminated in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, The proper uses of timber harvest as a management tool can effectively contribute to restoring the health of forests; and

WHEREAS, The proper use of timber harvest as a management tool can help reduce dangerously high levels of fuels resulting in the potential of catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS, Prescribed fires, used without the complement of timber harvest, often destroy economically viable, renewable resources and violate air quality and visibility standards; and

WHEREAS, Better national forest timber programs are essential for proper stewardship of Colorado's forests and improvement of the health, condition, and structure of the natural environment; now, therefore.

Be it Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-first General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein; That we, the members of the General Assembly, respectfully urge that:

(1) The United States Forest Service Chief and the Colorado Congressional delegation support proper timber harvesting as a management tool to ensure better forest health in Colorado;

(2) The Colorado Congressional delegation support the Rocky Mountain Regional Forester's strategy to reverse the decline of forest management programs and to reach a more effective program level by the year 2000; and

(3) The Colorado Congressional delegation support Congressional efforts to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of national forest management.

Be it further resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to each member of Colorado's Congressional delegation, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, and the Rocky Mountain Regional Forester.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Colorado Senate for adopting Senate Joint Resolution 97-26 in support of proper timber management to ensure better forest health in our state. State

and local input into the management of our public lands is essential to maintain a healthy forest and thriving economy. I fully support their recommendations for better state and local involvement in the planning and implementation of forest policies. This resolution, sponsored by Colorado State Senator Don Ament, enjoys very strong support in Colorado. I thank Senator Ament, and his colleagues for their efforts and dedication to the state. I assure my former colleagues in the Colorado General Assembly that I will do everything in my power to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the management of our national forests.

In Congress my colleagues and I on the House Resources Committee and the Subcommittee on Forests and Forests Health are working to ensure that the Forest Service and the Administration hear Colorado's message loud and clear. On February 25th, the subcommittee held oversight hearings on the Administration's roadless area moratorium. There, county commissioners, forestry experts and Forest Service officials testified on the issue of access to our public lands for management, resources and recreation. The Forest Service's new "no access" policy, by conservative estimates, will lock up at least 34 million acres of public lands. Once again, the federal government has proposed a one-size-fits-all solution in contravention of forest planning practices that formerly relied on local participation and public input.

On March 26th, we will hold an extensive hearing before the House Resources, Budget and Appropriations Committees into the operations, budgeting and management of the Forest Service. There, with my colleagues, I intend to examine better management alternatives and push for positive change. Proper management of our forests can provide habitat for our wildlife as well as recreational and economic resources for our people.

Colorado Senate Joint Resolution 97-26 serves as a proper basis for congressional oversight. I commend the document to my colleagues and urge their full attention to the measure.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Colorado State Senators, Ken Arnold, Jim Congrove, Dick Mutzebaugh, Maryanne Tebedo, and Dave Wattenberg, who joined Senator Don Ament in sponsoring and promoting Colorado Senate Joint Resolution 98-26.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

TRIBUTE TO JUDY MELLO

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 1998

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, we have all come to accept that we now live in a global society. One remarkable woman who recognized this fact long ago is Judy Mello. I wish to pay tribute to her today.

Since 1994, Judy has served as President and CEO of World Learning, an organization committed to helping develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute effectively to international understanding and global development. World Learning currently runs over 220 programs in 120 countries, providing direct program services to more than 300,000